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OO RUEHFK RUEHKS RUEHNAG RUEHNH  
DE RUEHOK #0056 0660800  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 070800Z MAR 07  
FM AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0719  
INFO RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 7877  
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 0176  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA PRIORITY 2283  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 0164  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0187  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0405  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1111

UNCLAS OSAKA KOBE 000056

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#) [KN](#)

SUBJECT: PRO-NORTH KOREAN DEMONSTRATION IN KOBE - HIGH TURNOUT BUT  
LOW IMPACT

REFS: A) NAGOYA 00013 B) 06 OSAKA KOBE 00238

1. (SBU) About 3,300 members and supporters of the pro-DPRK General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chosen Soren) held a noisy but peaceful outdoor demonstration in the Higashi Yuenchi area in Kobe on Saturday, March 3. The demonstration was billed as the "Kinki District Convention of Koreans Living in Japan" and held simultaneously with similar events in Tokyo and Nagoya (reftel A).

2. (SBU) Rally speakers criticized the GOJ and police for their investigations and arrests of Chosen Soren leaders in western Japan over tax violations and what they termed the "suppression" of ethnic Korean schools in Kobe and Tokyo. The participants, who came from a wide area of western Japan and Shikoku island, then marched in the streets of downtown Kobe for several hours along an approved route.

3. (SBU) Mr. Norihiko Onari, a DPRK expert at the Public Security Intelligence Bureau, downplayed the connection of the Kobe demonstration to the Japan-DPRK Working Group meeting in Beijing currently underway, since the demonstrations were planned over a month ago. Despite the turnout, the demonstration only received small inside coverage in two mainstream local newspapers, underlining the decline in Chosen Soren influence following its financial problems (reftel B) and public outrage over last year's DPRK missile launches and nuclear test.

4. (SBU) Osaka and Kobe are home to over 22,000 ethnic North Korean residents, the largest population concentration in Japan. Although Chosen Soren has been absent from the public scene in western Japan recently, the organization clearly made an effort to reverse that trend. However, none of post's contacts believe that Chosen Soren can reclaim influence in western Japan.

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